

SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE
SENATOR MARK DESAULNIER, CHAIRMAN
20011-2012 Session

Committee Policy On: PROJECT BILLS

Policy: The committee will not vote to report any measure out of the committee if the measure contains provisions advantaging or directing the construction or funding of a specific transportation project and such a project is subject to the statutory project selection process administered by the Department of Transportation, the California Transportation Commission, or a regional transportation agency.

Discussion: Section 167 of the Streets and Highways Code provides that the state budget shall not include specific appropriations for specific transportation improvement projects, and the Legislature shall not enact legislation containing specific individual transportation projects. Instead, the California Legislature has enacted a number of measures in the past to facilitate an orderly selection of projects to be funded with transportation funds. The process involves the participation of the local and regional governments, the Department of Transportation, and the California Transportation Commission.

This process culminates with California Transportation Commission adopting the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the five year state transportation capital outlay program, which is updated every two years.

The biennial STIP process begins with the California Transportation Commission's adoption of a multi-year estimate of all available state and federal funds that the Department of Transportation, regional, and local agencies can use to fund transportation projects. The amount of funds available to the state and each county is determined by statutory formulas. The local and regional transportation agencies and Department of Transportation then use the fund estimate to recommend and select individual projects for funding from their respective share of the revenue. The California Transportation Commission, based on the project recommendations and selections of the regional transportation agencies and the Department of Transportation, adopts the STIP that forms the basis for scheduling projects and spending all available funds during those years. The STIP process endeavors to ensure that transportation investments are made on a system basis. That is the STIP process seeks to make investments in a coherent fashion to ensure the efficient movement of vehicles through a corridor or segment of the highway network. This investment strategies increases the value of the investment.

If the Legislature were to approve, advance, or fund a specific project outside the STIP process, the program would be out of balance and adjustments to balance it, which would entail either deleting or delaying other projects, would be required. Given the fact that hundreds of projects are included in the multi-year program, legislative action could jeopardize the schedule and funding of the projects. If one project is approved or advantaged through an individual bill or legislative action, it would invite many more attempts to promote particular projects. Each legislator would be asked to introduce a similar bill for projects in his or her district that were not included in the adopted STIP. The system investment approach to the state highway network would be abrogated.

Adopted by Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing on March 29, 2011.